

Serial No. 09/628,352

IN THE CLAIMS

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please **AMEND** claims 1-2 and 5-12 as follows.

Please **ADD** new claims 13-17 as follows.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A communication promotion method used in a chat system having a plurality of chat devices which share any of virtual chat spaces being configured on a network and which send and receive messages among themselves, comprising:

linking or installing in ~~each chat device a character~~ the chat devices image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants that can be operated according to ~~a predetermined operation instruction~~ instructions received by the chat device via the network from a chat administrator of the chat space of the chat devices,

detecting by the chat administrator a predetermined event occurring within the chat space of the chat devices,

determining at the chat administrator a plurality of different operation instructions for operating ~~each chat device character~~ the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants linked or installed in the chat devices, based on the detected event,

determining at the chat administrator ~~a plurality of different chat devices in the chat space that operate the characters, as determined different operation instruction destinations to be sent one of different chat device destinations corresponding to~~ the determined plurality of the different operation instructions for operating the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants linked or installed in the different chat device destinations, and

sending by the chat administrator the determined plurality of the different operation instructions via the chat system to the determined corresponding different operation instruction chat device destinations to operate the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants linked or installed in the different chat device

Serial No. 09/628,352

~~destinations operating each character.~~

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The communication promotion method set forth in claim 1, wherein an ~~operation instruction's originating address, an operation instruction's and a destination address of the operation instructions for operating the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants,~~ and an event detection time, are sent to the determined ~~corresponding different chat device operation instruction destinations~~ together with the operation ~~instruction instructions.~~

3. (CANCELLED)

4. (CANCELLED)

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An administration device used in a chat system having a plurality of chat devices which share any of virtual chat spaces being configured on a network and which send and receive messages among themselves, comprising:

an association table that relationally stores a predetermined event occurring in a chat space with participating chat devices, and a corresponding plurality of different predetermined operation instructions corresponding to a plurality of different ~~operation instruction chat device destinations to operate a character image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants that are~~ linked to or installed in each ~~operation instruction destination the chat device destinations,~~

a chat event detector detecting a predetermined event, based on the association table,
an operation instruction determiner determining the plurality of the different operation instructions for the detected event, based on the association table,

a destination determiner determining the ~~corresponding plurality of the different operation instruction destination chat devices~~ chat device destinations to be transmitted the determined plurality of the different operation instructions, based on the association table, and

a transmitter transmitting the determined plurality of the different operation instructions via the chat system to ~~each corresponding different operation instruction destination the determined corresponding chat device destinations to operate the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants that are linked to or installed in the chat device destination~~ each character.

Serial No. 09/628,352

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The administration device set forth in claim 5, wherein the transmitter transmits an originating address of each determined operation instruction, a destination address of each determined operation instruction, and an event detection time, to each corresponding different operation instruction chat device destination chat device together with the determined operation instruction.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The administration device set forth in claim 5, additionally comprising a controller selecting a plurality of operation instructions that correspond to events in the chat space to operate the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants, based on predetermined conditions when the plurality of the operation instructions occur with a same chat device as the a chat device destination, and sending the selected plurality of the operation instructions to the same chat device.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The administration device set forth in claim 5, wherein when ~~a plurality of the characters~~ the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants are linked to or installed in ~~the one of the chat device devices~~, the destination determiner determines one or the plurality of the ~~characters~~ image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants to operate from among the ~~chat device characters~~ image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants, based on ~~an~~ the detected event, and

the transmitter sends a determined operation instruction including a character specification of the image representations and/or the physical representations of chat the participants to the corresponding ~~operation instruction destination~~ chat device destination to operate therein the characters specified image representations and/or physical representations of the chat participants.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~A character~~ An image representation and/or a physical representation of a chat participant linked to or installed in a chat device ~~which that~~ is connected to a network, ~~and which~~ shares any of virtual chat spaces being configured on said network, ~~and which~~ sends and receives messages, comprising:

an input unit to ~~input receive character operation instructions to operate the~~ image representation and/or the physical representation of the chat participant;

a communicator sending the input operation instructions and receiving operation instructions for operating the image representation and/or the physical representation of the chat

Serial No. 09/628,352

participant character, between the chat device and the character image representation and/or the physical representation of the chat participant, and

a controller controlling the character image representation and/or the physical representation of the chat participant based on said received operation instructions.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An administration device used in a chat system having a plurality of chat devices which share any of virtual chat spaces being configured on a network and which send and receive messages among themselves, comprising:

an association table that relationally stores a predetermined event occurring in a chat space with participating chat devices, and a corresponding plurality of different operation instructions corresponding to a plurality of different operation instruction chat device destinations to operate a character image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants that are linked to or installed in each operation instruction destination the chat device destinations,

a chat event detector detecting a predetermined event, based on the association table, a determiner determining the plurality of the different operation instructions for the detected event, based on the association table, and

a transmitter transmitting the determined plurality of the different operation instructions to each corresponding the plurality of different operation instruction destination chat device destinations to operate each character the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants that are linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable recording medium recording an administration program controlling a chat administration device in a chat system in which a plurality of chat devices share any of virtual chat spaces operating on a network and send and receive messages among themselves, according to a process comprising:

preparing an association table that relationally stores a predetermined event occurring in a chat space with participating chat devices, and a corresponding plurality of different predetermined operation instructions corresponding to a plurality of different operation instruction chat device destinations to operate a character image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants that are linked to or installed in each operation instruction destination the chat device destinations,

detecting a predetermined event, based on the association table,

Serial No. 09/628,352

determining the plurality of the different operation instructions for the detected event, based on the association table,

determining the corresponding plurality of the different operation instruction destination chat devices chat device destinations to be transmitted the determined plurality of the different operation instructions, based on the association table, and

transmitting the determined plurality of the different operation instructions via the chat system to ~~each corresponding different operation instruction destination~~ the determined corresponding chat device destinations to operate ~~each character~~ the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants that are linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable recording medium recording an administration program controlling a chat administration device used in a chat system having a plurality of chat devices which share any of virtual chat spaces being configured on a network and send and receive messages among themselves, according to a process comprising:

preparing an association table that relationally stores a predetermined event occurring in a chat space with participating chat devices, and a corresponding plurality of different predetermined operation instructions corresponding to a plurality of different ~~operation instruction chat device destinations~~ to operate a character image representations and/or physical representations of chat participants that are linked to or installed in each operation instruction destination the chat device destinations,

detecting a predetermined event, based on the association table,

determining the plurality of the different operation instructions for the detected event, based on the association table, and

transmitting the determined plurality of the different operation instructions to ~~each corresponding the plurality of different operation instruction destination chat device destinations~~ to operate each character the image representations and/or the physical representations of the chat participants that are linked to or installed in the chat device destinations.

13. (NEW) The chat administration device according to claim 5, wherein the chat event detector detects the predetermined event from among a plurality of association table events comprising participate in the chat space, withdraw from the chat space, a number of chat participants in the chat space exceeds a predetermined number, a change in a mode or a topic of the chat space, a chat statement has not been made for longer than a specified time, a

Serial No. 09/628,352

statement of a chat participant nickname or name, chatting is frequent, and specifying a chat participant image representation and/or physical representation.

14. (NEW) The chat administration device according to claim 5, wherein if the chat event detector detects a plurality of the events at same chat device destination or at same image representation and/or physical representation of a chat participant, as overlapping events, the operation instruction determiner processes the detected overlapping events according to a specified event processing method.

15. (NEW) The chat administration device according to claim 14, wherein the specified event processing method is one of sequentially executing the detected overlapping events, and selectively executing one or a plurality of the detected overlapping events.

16. (NEW) The chat administration device according to claim 5, wherein if the chat event detector detects a plurality of the events at same chat device destination or same image representation and/or physical representation of a chat participant, as overlapping events, the operation instruction determiner selects one or a plurality of the detected overlapping events according to one or more selection criteria comprising:

- if same event occurs within a specified time period, ignoring second and subsequent occurrences of the same event,
- selecting a first or a last event within a specified time, or
- selecting one or a plurality of the detected overlapping events according to a priority assigned to each event in the association table.

17. (NEW) The chat administration device of claim 16, wherein the event priority assignment comprises:

- when events occur continuously in a short time, only an operation instruction corresponding to a highest priority event or a specific number of higher priority events is selectively sent to a chat device destination or an image representation and/or physical representation of a chat participant,
- giving priority to events on a current chat space rather than to events on a sub-chat space, or
- giving priority to events based on a destination of the corresponding operation instructions.